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## CHAPTER VI

## SOME SOCIAL GROUPINGS

**Groups in the tribe—analysis of the groups of a district—character, divisions, and subdivisions of groups—the patrilineal lineage as the core of co-residence—marriage groups, age sets, and regimentation.**

The Lovedu tribe is not, in the main, a body of kinsmen tracing descent from a single far-off ancestor. The nuclear or royal groups are the Lovedu proper. They are, strictly speaking, *khovo*, though you will very rarely hear this word, because it and its praise-title are associated with *ku khova*, to elongate the *labia minora*. Ignoring popular usage and Lovedu sensitiveness, we may still call them *khovo*, leaving to posterity to decide whether the name will survive or be lost in oblivion. This nuclear group, the *khovo*, constitutes no more than 10 per cent. of the tribe; or, in other words, only one person in every ten bears the nuclear group name, *khovo*, which we must think of as a patrilineal descent name, not unlike such oft-recurring surnames as Jones or Smith among us. There are numerous other group names and people bearing different names of this kind may be regarded as having originally been unrelated. They constitute over 90 per cent. of the tribe.

It is obvious that in these circumstances very strong bonds must exist to maintain the allegiance of the non-related groups, just as, among us, a vast network of institutions, of interlinked organizational systems, ramifying throughout the society, exists side by side with common sentiments of loyalty and of solidarity. But the interlinking machinery is very different from ours, and neither nationalism nor ideology is important as unifying sentiments or principles. There are important structural links which, on the one hand, form part of the social system and on the other are intimately bound up with the political system; and in this way both *hlonhlo* and *mumyuselo*, or bride-price, are used to strengthen the solidarity of the tribe as a unit. These links are discussed elsewhere. They make good the absence of the bonds between the nuclear ruling group and the other groups. There are, for instance, the fundamental reliance upon the rain-making powers of the queen, the periodical tributes to the queen by the districts, and the national organization of some of the 'schools'. In this chapter we are concerned to point out some of the social groupings in relation to one another and to the solidarity of the tribe. The great work they have to do in the society will be realized when we remember how complicated and all-pervasive in our society are the links which unite us to one another and to the state. The work is all the greater in a society in which the language is the language of a group larger than the tribe, the historical background and traditions are not uniform, but diverse, governmental machinery is incipient and hardly impinges upon the subject, and there cannot be said to be much organization of common interests and ideals.

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571 The first thing that strikes us is the large number of constituent
●619 groups in the tribe. Some of these groups are totemic, others are not,
565 they come from all points of the compass. They are not clans in the accepted sense of the word and have no functions as such. They are so interwoven with the nuclear group, the Lovedu, and with one another, that it is not easy to disentangle them; they are usually interspersed with the general population, but, for one reason here and another there, they may be more or less concentrated in some part of the country. It is chiefly through the district organization that they become linked, upon the pattern of kinship, of marriage and bride-price, with the nuclear group. These groups are not arranged in any definite hierarchy of rank, though rank is of very great importance in the society. Yet there are distinctions between them: some are as honoured as the Lovedu themselves; some are regarded as rather of lower status, though intermarriage with them is not disapproved; others, mostly of non-Sotho origin, are despised and intermarriage with them is frowned upon.

[565] This does not mean that there are institutionalized classes; there are
621 no rigid lines cutting across the society, just as there are no definite
571 functions that may be said to hold together these constituent groups.
613 Functions of a political nature are bound up with the districts, not with the constituent groups as such; some religious and ritual functions are also bound up with the districts, but most of them (except those of national importance) are connected with kin groups, and this never means the whole constituent group and, indeed, usually not the lineage, but people from both sides of the family. Yet the lineage as a descent group has at least legal significance and to it are attached certain rights. On the whole, however, the lineages pale into significance beside the marriage or the bilateral kin groups. There is structural tension between the group which gives the brides and the group which gives the cattle; but one notices in ordinary life not so much the tension as the elaborate measures for maintaining good relations. Not only do the relations between these two groups obtrude themselves more prominently than those within the patrilineal lineages, but it is the main concern of judicial proceedings in the *khoro*, the most impressive feature of public life, to preserve harmony between them. There is ample reason for this emphasis because the whole social structure and, through it, the whole tribal system and the strongest bonds with the queen, depend upon the proper functioning of these groups. And these are again a part of, and supported by, the bilateral kin, who, with the cattle, the one relying on the other, constitute the ultimate basis of the social structure.

[561] There are also age-groupings in the society. They have some wide
571 integrating functions, but on the whole the organization into regiments is unimpressive and for national purposes of little value. The hierarchy of age plays a part of importance, however, as a regulative device; but it is not coincident with the hierarchy of rank and thus often occasions serious tensions in the social structure. Finally, we should remind the reader, though we cannot deal with them here, of groupings brought about by modern conditions. There is the more or less compact Christian group, with its divergent interests and loyalties, and the very scattered

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group of sophisticated men who, influenced by their experiences of European town life, have acquired values and needs disruptive of the old alinements. They have already come to our notice. But if we deal with them, we must also discuss the disturbances in the old settled spheres of men as distinguished from women. For this and for any elaboration of the manifold aspects of the various social groupings touched upon in this chapter we have no room. It will be sufficient to draw attention to a few points only.

Let us look briefly at the tribe as a whole. We shall obtain some impression of its constituent elements by merely listing the group names of the various district heads. For the moment it is sufficient to accept this name as a kind of distinctive designation; it may be the name of a totem or a place, of a dynasty or a tribe. Within the effective jurisdiction of the queen, which extends considerably beyond the reserve and the tribal farms, the following group names of district heads are found: thirty-four district heads bearing the name *kwevo Muhale*, or the name of the royal group; sixteen Elephants, mostly of very different ancestries and very divergent places of origin; nine *kwevo raudigwa* or *vamudiga*; fifteen *kwevo vathole* or *vamahasha*, both spoken of as 'brothers' of the royal group, and also four *kwevo mutshazi* or *vamavulana* not originally related but now the great maternal uncles of the queen's group; eleven Crocodiles, mostly from the west, but some with secondary designations indicating probable diverse ancestries; thirteen Venda, some with, some without totems, some from as near as Tswale, others from as far as Mpefu; five Lions whose interrelations, if they exist at all (coming as they do from such different directions and at such different times), are wholly obscure and lost in oblivion; and besides these, smaller numbers of Leba, those curious kosher-killing, exclusive wanderers with their moon ritual from the north, of Wild Dogs from the highveld, Khalaga and Dibanyika from Rhodesia, of Shangana-Tonga of various branches of that great group of peoples whose tenure of headship is only half recognised, of Koni who, in proportion to their numbers, hold very few districts, not to mention Ramafalo, who is a Pig of Luvhi, one *kwevo madavele*, a few Sia of Levia, and several sub-heads under the *vamamadeba* who are descended from Mugodo, the last of the Lovedu kings.

It is not to be thought that the relative number of heads of this or that constituent group in any way reflects the number of people of that group in the tribe. There is, for instance, a considerable population of Porcupines, of Impalas, of Mbezi, of Goats, but there are no district heads of these groups or clusters. Nor must we conceive of these groups as entities having something more in common than their name and, where it has not been lost in oblivion, a background of history and tradition. There is no solidarity between their members. Where some of them live together in a district, it is their relationship to the head or the emphasis upon the common life of the territorial unit that holds them together rather than any conception of a link with a far-off ancestor or of a mystical bond with their totem. They are said to swear (*ku ana*) by their totem, which is sometimes called *muyano* (what is sworn by), sometimes *mutapo* (what is grouped together)—these two words are occasionally sharply

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571 622 619 distinguished, but more often, especially among the common people, they are identified or hopelessly confused. But if to swear by one's totem means something in some cases and among some groups, it usually signifies as little as when we swear by Jupiter.

571 619 Before embarking upon a further elucidation of these names, let us look more closely at an area in Ŭulovedu so as to obtain a better idea of the distribution and nature of these constituent groups. We select an area towards the south-west, of about four square miles, because if we go to the centre we shall obtain an exaggerated impression of the proportion of *khcvo*, the royal group, whereas in the extreme north we may well think that we are in a tribe of Shangana-Ṭonga.

[161] In this area, which has a population of about 830 people, there are, counting the group names of both men and women, Elephants, Cattle, Crocodiles, Leopards, Porcupines, Goats, Lions, Pigs, Duikers, Impala, Wild Dogs, Khalaga and Sia without totem, besides a fair sprinkling of Shangana-Ṭonga and even people using the name Zimbabwe. There are two individuals calling themselves Oorlams, one Bush and one Kaps (Cape coloured), which is most unusual and does not reflect the position in the tribe as a whole. There are, finally, some whom we must merely designate Venda because, as they say, they swear by no animal or object and they do not know to what Venda group they belong. That is not the end of the matter, for in the Elephants (*ɗou*) cluster there are fifteen different groups. Some of them may be remotely related, but they distinguish themselves by different secondary names and know of no common ancestry or of any links in the past; indeed, as they come from very different parts, they positively deny a common origin. For instance, there are *ɗou* of Khalaga, recent-comers from Rhodesia, *ɗou* of Tsubye, far away to the south-east near Phalaborwa, *ɗou* of Thovob in the Game Reserve to the north-east, *ɗou* of Ravothata, the messengers, it is said, of the royal group when they migrated from Rhodesia, *ɗou* of Sefareni, whose nearest relatives are in Nareni (Mahlo) country. Similarly, there are ten different groups of Lions: some, like the Khiŋa, were the aboriginal inhabitants, who are said to have known no fire and no political organization, and were ousted by the Lovedu; others, like those of Selowa, come from the far east with the cult of the possessed, which they might have adopted from the Ndau in Portuguese Moçambique, and still others hail from Vendaland and Ŭuḍokwa. There are likewise clusters of Crocodiles with four, of Duikers with four, of Pigs, Khalaga, Sia, Impala and Wild Dogs, each with two different secondary designations (division or group names). Among the Shangana-Ṭonga, though they are comparatively few in number, there are no less than four different totems and nine different other names (*shibongo*), such as Loyi, Khosa, Mavunda, Mathie and Ngoveni. Reckoning all the differently named groups as distinct, we have over sixty such groups in this area alone.

The following table gives a rough representation of the position in the area in question:

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PEOPLE IN AN AREA OF FOUR SQUARE MILES, WITH A POPULATION OF *c.* 830

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| Cluster | Per cent. of Population | No of Groups | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Elephant | 14 | 15 | Groups very divergent as to tribe (including Sotho, Venda, Khalaga, Leba—Shangana-Tonga. Elephants are enumerated under 7, below), place of origin and time of immigration. Majority of groups reducible probably to common, very far back, but now forgotten ancestor. A fortuitous cluster. |
| 2. Khalaga | 14 | 2 | No animal or object of reverence. Mostly recent-comers and directly from the north. Interrelations obscure, but some appear to be Sothoized Shangana-Tonga or Nyai. |
| 3. Pig | 11·8 | 2 | One of the groups, the *kwevo*, is of the royal nucleus and has further subdivisions; the other is from Mamavolo, a tribe which split from the Lovedu about 250 years ago. The two groups no longer acknowledge relationship. A genetic cluster. |
| 4. Lion | 11·8 | 10 | Groups very divergent as to tribe (Sotho, Venda, Khiŋga) and time of immigration. Some are aboriginal and were thinly scattered over a wide area, and their common ancestor, if any, has been forgotten; these aborigines cannot even remotely be linked with recent-comers from the north (Virwa), from the east (Thovolo) and from the south (Pedi). A fortuitous cluster. |
| 5. Porcupine | 10·2 | 2 | Said to be distinct from one another, coming at very different times from Phalaborwa and from Thapina; the connexion between them, if any, is obscure and is denied. |
| 6. Duiker | 8 | 4 | These are all Koni and the secondary designation refers to four tribes (Khaba of Maupa, Maake, and Mamija, all of whom are Koni, and the Letswalo). A genetic cluster. |
| 7. Shangana-Tonga | 8·3 | 13 | Four are totemic, totems being borrowed from the Sotho; the rest have retained their *shiŋgo*. Some came before the great migration, 1840–94; others as part of it. Still call themselves Tonga, but come from very different parts of Tongaland. |

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| Cluster | Per cent. of Population | No. of Groups | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8. Crocodile | 6·9 | 4 | Groups are reducible probably to two genetic clusters, the Kwena of Uudupi, who are Ngwato from Bechuanaland, and the Kwena from Khimosa in the east near the Game Reserve. |
| 9. Mbezi | 3·5 | 1 | People from East Vendaland, who are probably Nyai. All river animals are taboo to them. |
| 10. Cattle | 3·2 | 1 | All from Nareni originally and largely as a result of the transportation of the Letswalo in 1894. But some came later. |
| 11. Goat | 3·0 | 1 | All Venda, i.e. of the Kwindz group. Have lost the Venda observance of peeling the skin off the goat's tail before killing, which is still practised by the Tswale tribe near by. |
| 12. Impala | 2·4 | 2 | Some of them are from the north, some from the east. The Lovedu are sometimes also called *phala*, but the true significance of that is obscure. *Phala* in the east (Phalaborwa) are regarded as having had no fire, and were ousted by fire. |
| 13. Sia | 1·3 | 2 | Appear to have been neighbours of the Lovedu since very early times, living to the north of them. Some come from the Mashau (Venda); others from Molepo. Affinities obscure. |
| 14. Venda | 0·4 | 1 | Venda who cannot trace their origin or ancestry to any definite group; not all related. |
| 15. Zimbabwe | 0·3 | 1 | People from the north; they also call themselves Khalaga. Do not know the Zimbabwe ruins. |
| 16. Wild Dog | 0·2 | 2 | Probably these two groups are related, but the relationship is not recognized; all we can say is that they are Sotho. |
| 17. Leopard | 0·2 | 1 | Recent-comers from the highveld (Dokwa). |

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| Cluster | Per cent of Population | No. of Groups | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18. Bush | 0·2 | 1 | Said to be Vaalpens; a mixture of Bush and Bantu. From the towns. |
| 19. Kaps and Oorlam | 0·2 | 1 | Cape coloured. The word 'Oorlam' has a special connotation, implying sophistication. From town. |
| 20. Springbok | 0·1 | 1 | Origin obscure; come from Phalaborwa. |
| Total | 100·0 | 67 | |

This is the position in a single area. It is somewhat more complicated in the tribe as a whole; we certainly would not like to say how many clusters, groups, and sub-groups are to be found; and as for disentangling their origins and histories, and linking them up with common ancestors, that is a task which, if it can be successfully undertaken at all, will require infinite labour and extensive research. For our present purpose, it will be sufficient to indicate the nature of these groups. And let us first consider the nuclear group.

If you ask a Lovedu what his *mutupo* (group name) is, he might say *kwevo*; some, however, will say Wild Pig (*golove*). But upon closer examination it will be found that *golove* is really the *muyano*, though this is not a word that many of the other groups use. Certainly the name *golove* includes, not only the royal group, but also groups in several other tribes: Mamaila, Sekhopo, and Rakwadu are also Pigs of Muhale. The Pigs of Lubde, the Ramafalo, are associated with the Venda, though there are many in Vulovedu and since long ago some of the important national doctors assisting with the initiation 'schools' have come from this group. The Ramafalo are not regarded as being of the same group as the royal group, but they are nearer to it than the Mamavolo, Pigs of Madaji, who live on the highveld and with whom all, except the very oldest men and women, strenuously deny any relationship whatever. There is certainly nothing in common between the Pigs of Muhale and the Pigs of Madaji; even their customs and institutions differ more widely than those of the Lovedu do from such unrelated neighbours as the Khaha or the Nareni. There are quite a number of Pigs of Madaji, especially in the south-western districts of Vulovedu, and they are, of course, also scattered among many other tribes.

There are no all-pervasive bonds between these scattered *golove* people; there are merely bonds within the families and lineages of which they are made up. With their relatives in Vulovedu, who are not Pigs at all, their bonds are much closer than with people of the group name who fall outside the kin. If, again, we consider the Pigs of Muhale, we shall find that the relationship between their branches Mamaila, Rakwadu, and Sekhopo, on the one hand, and the royal group in Vulovedu, on the

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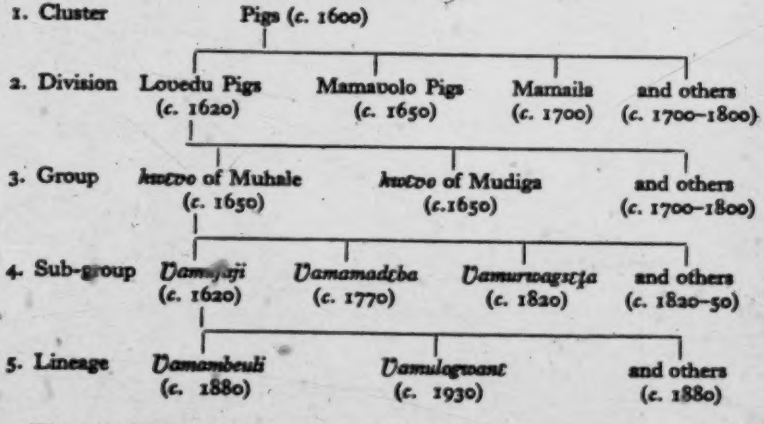
other, is hardly a close one; it is certainly not as close as that between the groups, the Mudiga, the Mahasha, and the royal family, which came into existence long before the Rakwadu and Sekhopo broke away. The Mudiga and the Mahasha are not clans; they have the same *mutupo* and *muyano* as the royal group, but each has his own distinctive praise (*khirɛdo*), though there are also distinctive praises of still further sub-divisions, the sub-groups, especially when a member of such sub-group is a district head.

The process of division and subdivision can be traced back to the very earliest times; but there are specific periods when the tendency towards division was specially marked, often coinciding with national crises, the parcelling out of new districts to relatives of the royal group, or the emergence of outstanding personalities. To-day in the royal family it is curious to observe how some of the sons of the queen's deceased brother say they are Mulogwane, others that they are Mujaji. They have strenuous arguments about the matter, as they are not quite sure whether the new designation is in imitation of surnames among Christians or in accordance with precedents of the past.

To sum up the position and to clarify the confusion somewhat we may state the position as follows:




There is, first, the all-inclusive group which we may call the *cluster* (1) of the Pigs. This is a genetic cluster because, although it is not generally recognized that all the Pigs are related or descendants of a single ancestor, their group histories are interconnected. Clusters are not all genetic; nor are they all totemic. In a fortuitous cluster, such as that of the Elephants or Lions, the histories cannot be linked up and no genetic relationships can be established or are recognized in any sense at all. Within the fortuitous cluster there may be smaller genetic clusters—for instance, some Lions or Elephants who have a common ancestor. The genetic cluster has large *divisions* (2), sections that broke away completely very long ago—for instance, the Lovedu Pigs or *kwɛvo* and the Mamavolo Pigs, with whom relationship is only very faintly recognized as a matter of

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history and by a few of the oldest men, and also more recent segments, such as the Mamaila Pigs and the Pigs of Sekhopo, with whom relationship is recognized fairly generally, but as a matter of form. Two individuals of such divisions cannot, however, concretely trace relationship. Within the divisions there are *groups* (3), such as the *kwɛvo* of Muhale, of Mudiga and so on, some very old, some of more recent date. These are real groups, however, in which some bonds exist, such as a common praise, and a few specially placed individuals can trace relationship to one another. These groups, again, are divided into *sub-groups* (4) of various orders and arising at various times, such as the *vamɨjaji*, who came into existence 100 years ago. According as we go further and further back, less and less people can trace relationship, and the sub-group imperceptibly merges into the group. On the whole, however, in spite of infinite variations, distant lineal relationship is generally recognized, but it is not given concrete expression in kinship terminology or in behaviour patterns. Finally, we have a further sub-division, which we call the *lineage* (5), between the members of which kinship terms and behaviour patterns come into play, to a greater or lesser extent according to the operation of a large number of circumstances, such as family pride, contiguous residence, agreement among one another, and so on. There are lineages in the process of being formed to-day, such as the *vamulogwane*, the children of Mulogwane, who died in 1934; but at present they are still members of a family, acting in concert in domestic situations, with which the lineage is usually not concerned at all.

Each of these, from the cluster to the lineage, as we have defined them, is functionally distinct in some ways; but they do not have distinctive generic names. We must not make the mistake of thinking that they are sharply demarcated from one another. The patrilineal alinement is secondary; it is overshadowed by the territorial alinement, which may cut across and break up the solidarity of the comparatively small and closely linked lineage. The largest group or cluster, such as the *golovɛ*, has no cohesion whatsoever. This is evident among the *golovɛ*; but it is much clearer among such clusters as the Elephants and the Lions, in which the groups bearing the names Elephant or Lion with a secondary designation may not be segments of a single original group at all. It is quite evident that a Shangana-Tonga Elephant cannot have any common ancestor with a Sotho Elephant; it is equally clear that there can hardly be any relationship between Elephants of Selowa, of Sia, and of Sefareni, for the Selowa people are from the north-east and the Sia and Sefareni, though local, have entirely different histories and ultimate origins.

The names by which people designate themselves cannot be relied upon to establish relationship. A man may designate his group or ancestry or tribe by a totem or chief or dynasty or place or other name or a combination of these. Tradition records several unaccountable or arbitrary changes in these designating names, even in totems; often a non-totemic group adopts a totem of another group or a totemic group adds to its existing totems with subsequent loss of some. And this process occurs, not only in respect of totems or primary names, but also in respect of secondary names. There is a word (*phodemulɔɔ* or *khaga-mutupo*) for

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571 a person who, not merely when he has no legal father, takes the totem or
619 secondary name of another group. We can, therefore, make no off-hand deductions from the names. Identity or similarity of name may or may not imply similar ancestry. A positive assertion of similarity or identity based upon the similarity or identity of the descriptive name is not conclusive; it may merely reflect a present sense of being related, important in itself, but with no basis in history or fact. It is by no means easy to deal with a situation of such infinite complexity; and from our present point of view there is no need to do so. Except where the name is significant for some other purpose, not that of reckoning relationship as such, and except within the functioning unit, little attention is given to these names. For the purposes of rank within the tribe, against other tribal units, it is important to designate oneself, not Elephant or Lion, but Lovedu. But when we have said this as regards the general position, we have also, as in everything else, to begin pointing out exceptions.

571 An Elephant of Ravothaṭa has as such nothing in common with an
565 Elephant, say, of Selowa. Their backgrounds, their origins, even their
619 customs, are conceived to be different. The Elephant of Ravothaṭa have come in recent years to tolerate the Elephant of Selowa; intermarriage is beginning to establish bonds, and common allegiance to the queen is breaking down the old barriers; yet on the whole an Elephant of Selowa is a *murska*, a person of the low country, not fit to aspire to such high positions in the tribe as the Elephants of Ravothaṭa. The *murska* is, however, much closer to the Ravothaṭa than the Shangana-Ṭonga Elephants; the latter are not unlike the lower classes, the dwellers in the slums, as compared with the aristocracy, among us. Through sagacity and some forms of achievement, they can rise in the scale, but as yet intermarriage is frowned upon and there are some strong barriers between them. What we wish to point out is that the Elephants of Ravothaṭa are far more closely associated with their immediate blood relatives and their relatives-in-law, whether they be Elephants or Lions or Pigs or what not, than with Elephants of Selowa or other Elephants, including far-off *varavothata*; and by far off we mean not merely any one of the sub-group within which kinship terms and behaviour obtain, but also any one of this lineage who lives far away or with whom there is no agreement. And yet there is something more to the matter. The history of the Ravothaṭa, their very early association with the royal group as messengers on the way from Rhodesia, the fact that since the earliest times their heads held an extensive district and still do, their prestige as makers of the skin of the sacred drums, all this and more places them in a special position. These things distinguish the Ravothaṭa as a group; they are like the crest of a noble family or like its traditions. They are scattered all over the tribe, it is true, and any ordinary member of the group would not presume to give himself airs because of the achievements of the past. They never act together, except within the limits of the interested family or lineage, just as happens anywhere else; yet there is some consciousness of belonging together, as indeed there is among families among us.

The same may be said of any other groups in Ṷulovedu. There are, for instance, the *vamavulana*, so closely linked to the royal group to-day

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that they are called the *kwɛvo* of Tshazi. Their history also dates back to the earliest times, when they were Tshazi quite unrelated to the *kwɛvo*. They are now and have been since the time of Khiali (*c.* 1740) the great maternal uncles of the royal group. They have their distinctive praise-titles and also a distinctive laudatory response. If one of the Mavulana is called by his superior he answers by prefixing his words with the praise *moni*. These laudatory responses (for which there is no generic name) are found only among a few groups. The Ravothaṭa say *zemula*, the Crocodiles of Vudupi *myagani*, the *kwɛvo mulemyazi*, the Dipanyika *ɛpya*, some Venda (those from Twsale) *ŋgo*, the Khaḍa *khɛnɛlo*, and the Lions of Magwale *maan*. This laudatory response honours both the speaker and the person addressed; and it occurs sometimes in the great praises of the group—for instance, 'Mavulana of Vutshazi! At Makhifaja, the place of pasturing, we pasture our cattle in autumn; at Ḍaja it is that the cattle graze in spring. We are *moni*.' A specific response does not, however, belong to the whole group. You may hear a *kwɛvo* say *mule-myazi*, but, after all, the Tswale also call themselves *kwɛvo*, and they say *ŋgo*, while the Mahasha, who are *kwɛvo rathɔle*, may answer *mulovedu rathɔle*, and a Crocodile of Vudupi, *vudupi vya mamyaka*.

The cluster, such as all the Pigs or all the Elephants, never has one common praise-title. One does not even find a common praise for many groups or sub-groups, such as the Crocodiles, say, of Vudupi; and the same is true of most of the groups. The members of some of the groups and sub-groups use common praise-titles, but the really live praises, those that stir people and stand as a symbol of their unity, are the district praises. They are taught in the *vyali* initiation and are sung when beer is brought by the district to the queen. The district praise may or may not coincide with the praise of the sub-group or lineage of the head of the district. The Mudiga of Madumani, for instance, one of the sub-groups of the Mudiga, identify themselves closely with the royal group, but their distinctive praise-title refers to the mountain of their district, just as the distinctive praise of the Mudiga of Mareroni, another district, refers to the place name as well as to a forebear to whom the district was originally given. In addition, both Madumani and Mareroni have the old Mudiga praise, 'You are hemmed in [by lions]' (*le a digwa*). The local district praise is far more alive than the group or sub-group praise, if it exists at all, in the case of people living in the district who are not Mudiga, but Crocodiles or Elephants or Lions and so on. It is thus far more usually a locality than a group praise, though, with regard to the people of the lineage of the head, it often is both. The exquisite poetry of these praise-names cannot easily be rendered in English, '*Vuuga vya vuga bula ea na*', the praise of Levibi, we may translate as 'When it thunders at Vuuga, the rain rains', but we cannot recapture the rumbling of the *u*'s nor the pattering of the *a*'s.

Let us look more closely at the Crocodiles. They are by no means a real group at all. At Matsui, where one of them is a district head, they are very closely linked to the royal nucleus; the mother of Matsui was a relative of Mamujaji the mother of the first Mujaji, and it is at Matsui that the cow Mamujaji, belonging to the head of the district, is dedicated

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
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571 619 to the spirit of Mamujaji. These Matsui Crocodiles, though they can trace their ancestry to the Ngwato of Bechuanaland, are, firstly, a closely linked lineage in their district and, secondly, they are relatives-in-law of the royal group as well as of several other groups, including Mavulana; but the other Crocodile groups never so much as obtrude themselves in their interests or consideration. There are the Crocodiles of Maunadala, who also answer *myagani*; yet they have a distinctive praise in which they refer to themselves as the 'outcasts of the rain' (*murɔka wa metsi a bula*), because they are unable to make rain. They also are Crocodiles of Vudupi, but they are quite distinctive. They have a long history; they lived on the furthermost southern boundaries of Vulovedu relatively independent even for these parts; they held their national 'schools', as they still do to-day, with scant deference to the precedence that should be accorded to the queen; and among them are celebrated doctors of the *vuhwera*, *vyali*, and *gomana* complex of institutions. They owe their solidarity not so much to their common ancestry as to their concentration in a district in which they have been able to rule themselves and to build up their own traditions; but it is the solidarity of the people of Maunadala, whatever their totem or ancestry, not that of the Crocodiles. And much the same applies to Khada, the Elephants of Sefareni, also called *dou Khalaga*. Their genetic relationship with the Leba, though, by way of derogation, affirmed by their neighbours, cannot be credited; there is no association, no intermarriage, no acknowledged relationship with the Leba. Their immediate alliance is to Khada and the district; their ultimate alliance is with the royal nuclear group; with other Elephants they have nothing in common. And so we may go through all the constituent groups.

We have said enough to dispel the idea that the tie of real or supposed common ancestry in itself is of importance. In the larger groups the union that exists is due to other factors. The bonds within them do not even necessarily imply an informal feeling of preferential comradeship. The groups and sub-groups are not as such charged with specific functions, though, as we have seen, individuals in them may have special functions. For some time now one of the families of the Mudiga has been responsible for distributing the rain medicine (*mufugo*), but it would be a conception foreign to the Lovedu that the Mudiga only could be entrusted with this work. Not only Ramafalo, a Pig of Luɔdz, but many others of different groups are doctors of rain; and the same applies to other special positions.

571 794 619 It is not difficult to see how these things work. One may still observe the process of the introduction of a new cult in neighbouring tribes. Rasekwalo, a Crocodile, recently brought the *gomana* to the Tswale tribe, just as another Crocodile brought it to the Virwa of Makhatho. By running the 'school', these foreigners pocket some of the fees and naturally try to safeguard their rights. Their children follow them and the special function or privilege appears to be attached to the group of Crocodiles. But in time the drums of the cult become the drums, not of the Rasekwalo, but of the chief; his descendants may still take a prominent part, not because they are Crocodiles, but because some of the secrets

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
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and medicines are in their hands, or rather in the hands, not of the group, but of the specific family. That family may be honoured by being given a district to rule, and, as marriage is patrilocal, the area gradually may contain a fair percentage of the lineage of Crocodiles of Rasekwalo. They may be lucky and retain the privilege, but there need be no necessary continued association between the *varasekwalo* and the *gomana*. All depends on the circumstances.

No one thinks of a certain group as having certain functions, from which other groups are excluded. Yet only some district heads may, for instance, hold the great national 'schools'; it is rather the privilege of those heads whose people have traditionally held them. But this is not considered to be a privilege of the groups; it is the privilege of a lineage if that lineage happens also to be in charge of a district, for the organization is territorial. The Lovedu, indeed, use the word *khɔrɔ*, but, as applied to groups of people, it does not mean a segment of any kin group. One speaks of the *khɔrɔ* of Mavulana, for instance; but the term refers to the people that live in the district of Mavulana, not the *vamavulana* who are scattered over many districts. One may even speak of the *khɔrɔ* of Mulogwane, meaning a section of the capital which was in charge of Mulogwane. Equally, one hears of the groups, the Mudiga, the Mahasha, the Crocodiles of Udupi and so on spoken of as the *dikhɔrɔ* of the tribe. The connotation of the term is quite indefinite; it is as likely to refer to a group or sub-group of people as to a district; the word is not commonly used and is considered to be foreign.

The patrilineal groups or sub-groups have as such no functions. They do not regulate marriage, nor do they imply co-operation and mutual helpfulness. They are not at the basis of solidarity in legal and political situations. It is not unilateral grouping which unites people in their common interests or common activities, except when we come to the smaller sub-divisions, in which close relationship is acknowledged. If there was any real cohesion within them, the groups or sub-groups would cut across both tribes and districts; they would constitute a challenge to the principle of local contiguity, and the culture would be as diverse as the groups are numerous. Lack of group cohesion helps the diffusion of the fundamental values and institutions. There is great diversity in details, but the broad pattern of the culture stands out boldly. Unilateral grouping of a smaller kind, such as the core of a lineage, is not disruptive, for, on the one hand, the lineages which give tone to the remarkably autonomous districts are intimately linked with the queen and the tribal structure and, on the other hand, they harmonize admirably with that local unit which is a great political unit. Co-residence tends to be limited to the immediately effective lineage, the regulative principle being patrilocal marriage. The sentiments developing about co-residence are strengthened by inheritance and succession in the male line; the core of the lineage has common property and other interests. The segregation of this core is promoted by the tendency to take a name which, according to the circumstances, is the name of a grandfather or a father. It is the lineage, or, rather, the operative segment of a lineage, that may be regarded as an important institution in the society.

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938, 1961-1962) 1964
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Lobedu themselves. The society is remarkably egalitarian and there is no concentration of wealth in the hands of the ruling group. Nor would this be easy in a tribe in which the limited resources in property (in cattle) are used primarily for, and are constantly being converted into, marriage alliances.

Other distinctive features of the Lobedu are their marked agricultural bias; a fertility cult with sacred drums; masked dancing; ritual arrangements in ancestor worship (in the form of impersonation of the spirits, the predominance of beer offerings and the *phasa* rite of spurting water out of the mouth as an accompaniment to prayer) which link them more closely to the tribes to the north than to their southern Nguni and Sotho neighbours where the blood sacrifice and cattle cult are more clearly marked.

*Agnatic Groupings*

Despite the fact that they are ruled by a queen and that women can and do hold important political and religious positions the Lobedu are a patrilineal people in the sense that a man belongs to his father's lineage, property is inherited in the male line and marriage is patrilocal. The tribe is made up of a large number of different totemic groups, Lion, Elephant, Crocodile, Wild Pig, none of which, not even the royal Lobedu totem, is confined to the Lobedu tribe. All these totems are found in neighbouring tribes and many also in other parts of the Transvaal and elsewhere. A few groups have no totem (*motupo*) but designate themselves by their place of origin, e.g., *Mokhalaga*. Groups which have the same totem do not consider themselves related if they come from different places of origin. Elephant of Khalaga are thus unrelated to Elephant of Tsubye or Elephant of Thobolo. People sometimes swear by (*ana*) their totem and are supposed to but do not always abstain from eating it. The totemic name is useful only as a distinguishing mark; e.g., in divination the bones may indicate a person of the Elephant or Lion totem as responsible for illness or theft. Beyond this the *motupo* has little meaning and today many of the young people do not even use the term. The totemic group is not exogamous.

The lineage has no distinguishing name, the term *moloko* or